

Food Donation

Food donation is a wonderful, simple way to contribute to Mecklenburg County's communities and reduce the amount of food going to our landfill. We have many organizations, including churches, soup kitchens and food banks that feed our neighbors in need. These organizations are usually not-for-profit, which makes your donations tax deductible. Coordinating with these organizations is as simple as making a phone call to pick up large quantities of food, or arranging a drop-off for smaller amounts. To ensure the food you are donating is safe for human consumption, there are food donation guidelines available at websites such as FeedingAmerica.com that detail general packaging, storage, acceptable food conditions and donation practices.

Some organizations that accept food donations in Mecklenburg County include:

- Loaves and Fishes 704-523-4333
- Second Harvest Food Bank 704-376-1785
- Harvest Center of Charlotte 704-335-1554
- Matthews Help Center 704-847-8383

Additional Food Waste Resources

Food Donation - A Restaurateur's Guide can be downloaded at www.p2pays.org/ref/12/11907.pdf. This is a resource from the National Restaurant Association and the US Department of Agriculture that explains food donation in detail along with tips on what to donate and how to donate safely and effectively.

The Mecklenburg County Recycling Center Locator can be accessed at WipeOutWaste.com/RecycleCenters. This site can help you identify organizations in your area that accept food donations.



For more information visit WipeOutWaste.com

Waste Reduction & Recycling Tips for Restaurants

Whether you are running a fast-food franchise, full-service restaurant or fine dining establishment, finding ways to increase profit margins without affecting your customers' dining experience is important to the survival of all restaurants.

So how do you increase the bottom line and do your part for the environment? A key solution for restaurant owners in increasing profit margins is to practice recycling and waste prevention.

Through periodic reviews of work practices and some resourcefulness, restaurants can find ways to cut purchasing, waste disposal and utility costs, without having a negative impact on food quality or service.

While waste reduction and recycling will cut disposal costs, the biggest economic benefits come from resource efficiency. Smart purchasing and use of supplies will save businesses the most money of all waste management practices.



Waste Reduction Tips

Restaurants can reduce cost and minimize waste in many areas by implementing a simple waste management program, which can include the following:

- Avoid over-purchasing. Over-purchasing causes spoilage and waste. Take inventory frequently and adjust orders where necessary. Consider using an inventory tracking system, which includes a system to analyze inventory levels and spending as well as predict future needs. Many inventory tracking systems also include tracking of orders and use. Order tracking and inventory systems like this can count quantities and ingredients used per dish or order, keeping track of how much stock is used and should be purchased.
- Store items in the order you purchase them. Use older items first. Place newly purchased items at the back of the shelves and train employees on the order of use.
- Inspect deliveries. Many deliveries include unusable meats and perishable items which may have come open or spilled during shipment. Accepting delivery of these items can cause discrepancies in inventory tracking. Be sure to inspect deliveries and make adjustments to inventory tracking.
- To avoid spoilage, store food tightly and appropriately, eliminating air in containers.
- Use storage containers that can be reused and request that food be delivered in reusable and recyclable containers.
- Products that have a long shelf life should be purchased in bulk if you have the space available to store them. This will eliminate excess packaging.
- Use up all of a food product by reviewing your menu. For example, instead of discarding celery leaves, add them to a soup and make stock from leftover vegetable stems and heads.

Like any good waste management program, the most important aspect of dealing with food waste is to not create it in the first place. Foodservice operations produce excess amounts of food product, much of which could and should be prevented.



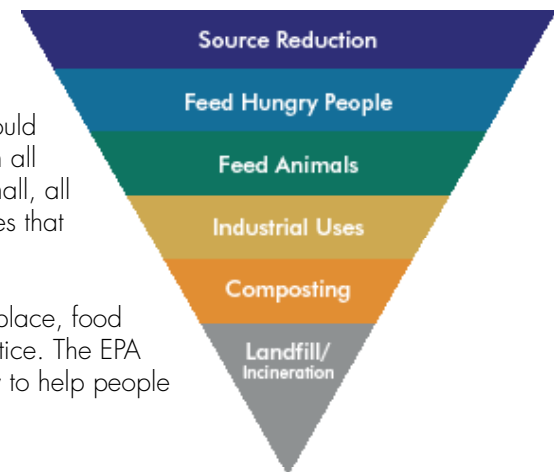
4-10% of foodservice food purchases wind up as pre-consumer waste. This includes not just vegetable trimmings, but also overproduction, spoiled items, burned items, salad bar leftovers and incorrect orders. All these waste sources are preventable through oversight, tracking and basic system changes.

Post-consumer food waste also makes up a huge part of the foodservice industry's waste stream. Post-consumer waste is harder to control, but is manageable. Portion size is the best option for controlling waste on the consumer end, both in the item recipe itself and the kitchen staff's portioning of dishes. Consider half-portions, children's menus and the serving size of side dishes, which tend to make up most of post-consumer food waste. Also, ensure the kitchen staff is properly trained in reducing waste.

Preventing waste not only cuts your food and labor, but can also cut your garbage bill. The city of Seattle conducted audits that found 63% of a restaurant's garbage was composed of organic material. A good waste management system with proper reduction, reuse and recycling systems in place can have a significant effect on your organizations bottom line.

One of the first steps to take to reduce food waste is to track current waste with some sort of tracking system. On the simple end are food waste logs where staff can record items being thrown away, then compile the lists on a daily or weekly basis. The list can be analyzed to make adjustments in ordering, prepping, cooking line procedures or any number of other variables. This is a very simple option and should be standard operating procedure in all foodservice operations. Large or small, all facilities produce excess food wastes that increase food costs.

With strong reduction programs in place, food reuse and recycling come into practice. The EPA has created a food waste hierarchy to help people make the best use of food waste.



For more information visit WipeOutWaste.com

